

NRCS NEWS RELEASE

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ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP) ALLOCATION MADE TO WHITEWATER JOINT POWERS BOARD

ELBA, MINNESOTA- November 6, 2006—USDA Under Secretary Mark Rey announced today that the Whitewater Joint Powers Board received \$150,000 in allocated EQIP funding for the Whitewater Watershed. The Whitewater Watershed is located within the driftless area of SE Minnesota and includes parts of Olmsted, Winona, and Wabasha Counties. The Whitewater watershed encompasses 204,940 acres in size.

“The Whitewater watershed has proven to be an effective conservation partnership in SE Minnesota. Since approval in 1999 a total of 87 land treatment measure contracts have been developed with Whitewater Watershed landowners covering over 11,000 acres. These conservation practices have been applied with cost-share funds provided by NRCS through the PL-566 small Watershed program. The allocation of dollars through EQIP program to the Whitewater Joint Power board furthers the local-state-federal cooperative conservation effort in SE Minnesota” said Rey.

EQIP is a federal Farm Bill program that provides voluntary assistance to farmers and ranchers who face threats to soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land. Through EQIP, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical and financial assistance to agricultural producers.

“Cooperative Conservation and using a Watershed Approach are two of NRCS’s Overarching delivery Strategies. The Whitewater Watershed has been a leader for many years in successfully implementing these strategies. The use of EQIP funding to help complete the project’s conservation objectives is important at this time because it also allows limited PL-566 Program funding to be focused on purposes unique to that program, such as flood protection and rural water supply” said Rey.

Since it’s inception in the 1930’s, NRCS’s conservation delivery system continues a unique partnership, delivering conservation based on local needs, while accommodating state and nation interests. It is an efficient, interdependent, locally-led conservation support system. For more information on NRCS, EQIP, the conservation partnership, and conservation programs available in your community, stop by your local USDA service center, or visit NRCS online at: www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov

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